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ABSTRACT

A follow-up study was conducted to determine the professional status of education majors who participated in an optional training program in the last semester of their junior year or the first semester of their senior year in college. The Block Program is oriented toward actual field experience in public school using the team approach to instruction. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the program and examine possible areas of change. A questionnaire submitted to former participants sought the following information: (1) What kind of teaching roles did the students assume? (2) At what level do the students teach? (3) What means did the students use to get jobs? and (4) If students did not get teaching positions, what alternative choices did they make? Results of the questionnaire response are presented in tabular form, and a discussion is presented on the overall value of the program and possible improvements that may be made. (JD)

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1977 GRADUATES OF THE BLOCK PROGRAM
(ONE OPTION FOR UNDERGRADUATE ELEMENTARY MAJORS)
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON

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INTRODUCTION

At the time of their matriculation, the Block Program was one of several major options available to students preparing to become elementary teachers. Two of these offerings were in fact complete professional programs; that is all professional components (courses, modules, experiences) were accounted for in the program itself. Presumably each of the elements was well articulated with the others and mutually reinforcing (approximately 45 semester hours). These programs were The Early Childhood Program and The Encore Program. Block is not a program in this complete sense and should be more appropriately identified as a project since only fifteen (15) hours of professional preparation were included.

The Block Project. Block is a professional semester for students in their second semester of the Junior Year or first semester of the Senior Year. The following characteristics are associated with this option: (1) team approach to instruction; (2) flexibility of program; (3) carefully articulated work with respect to preparation in Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies; (4) carefully articulated collegiate and field experiences in the schools (one-half day or one full day per week); and (5) student representation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the program itself. As a rule, students must sign up for all 15 hours which then ensures maximum flexibility in program planning. It is possible, however, for portions of the program to be waived as is true for those students who took math methods during their Sophomore Year (special project). On occasion, students are permitted to participate in the program over two semesters or a summer and a

semester because of unusual personal circumstances. About ninety percent of the students will take the full complement of hours in one semester.

Following the Block Semester, students have several different Student Teaching Options which they may exercise. Such choices are open to students in the Block and the Campus-Based Programs. (See Diagram 1)

Rationale. When students have choices, they often raise questions about various "programs". Answers to most of these questions have been readily available: Who teaches in the program? When and how are courses scheduled? How does one gain admission? What kinds of field experiences are provided? How will we be evaluated? Are there specific requirements? What are the unique characteristics of this program? Etc. Prior to 1976, however, we were not able to answer THE QUESTION: What happens to those who complete your program--Do they get jobs? One purpose of this study then was to continue studies begun two years ago and, thus, be able to provide up-to-date data relative to this question.

The senior faculty of the Block Program have--in addition to the above concern--an interest in other kinds of questions: To wit:

1. What kind of teaching roles do our students assume? (Self-Contained/Departmentalization/Team Teaching/Differentiated Staffing)
2. At what level do students teach? (Primary, Intermediate, other)
3. How do students get jobs? (Placement Bureau/Help of Friends/ Individual Initiation)
4. If students do not get teaching positions, what do they then do? (Are they in related fields where their professional background has had a significant bearing upon securing jobs?)

DIAGRAM 1

Options For Elementary Majors

Generalist Preparation

Campus-Based **Block Program** **Encore**

(Programs of Preparation for the generalist--K-6 teachers/no particular reference to age, grade level, or background of students to be taught)

Specialized Preparation

Early Childhood Education

(Program of Preparation for Teachers of Young Children Ages 3-8)

Multi-Cultural Education

(Program of preparation for Teachers of Children with Multi-cultural Backgrounds)

Choice of Student Teaching

- Non-Project
- Project
  - American Indian
  - Latino
  - Urban Semester
  - Etc.

Student Teaching Experience

All predetermined as a result of admission to program

*Backgrounds are also characterized by poverty.

The data generated, particularly with respect to the first two questions, could contribute significantly to future programatic decisions. For example, since the Block Program is one of three programs all designed to prepare the generalist, would it be wise to vary what is already a highly successful and attractive program such that prospective teachers would be prepared for a new and different kind of role? Rather than preparing teachers for the self-contained classroom--one who teaches everything with the possible exception of art, music, and/or physical education--should our focus change to a different type of role. Something, for example, associated with team teaching. Considerable thought has been given to this alternative and plans, at one time were actually underway to develop such a program. But should we move ahead? At the Master's Degree level, one of our options is provided essentially for those who teach (or wish to teach) in departmentalized situations. We've not had many takers--is there a market? Until these studies were undertaken, we were without any real data base.

Part I Procedures

A questionnaire was designed and then distributed to the Faculty/Student Committee of the Block Program. This group consisted of senior faculty, associate instructors, graduate assistants, and student reps. They met weekly, or bi-weekly, for purposes of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Their reactions provided the major input for questionnaire modification. See Appendix I for the questionnaire itself.

Questionnaires were sent out initially in late January, 1978. Enclosed with each questionnaire was a self-addressed/postage paid envelope. It was assumed at this time that our permanent address data was still accurate and that all students had gone on to complete graduation requirements according to the usual four-year calendar--that is, students in the Block Program in the spring and fall of 1976 could be expected to graduate in January, May or August of 1977.

Many questionnaires were returned as one might anticipate. A check was then made with our records department (School of Education) as well as other sources (Placement Bureau, Alumni Office) in an attempt to locate more information. At this juncture we discovered that some students had not completed their programs and degrees as assumed. On the basis of the new information obtained, questionnaires were sent out to appropriate students once again. This occurred in early February.

On March 3, 1978, follow-up questionnaires were sent out to all non-respondents. A letter to parents requesting their assistance was also enclosed. On April 1, 1978, we closed this phase of our search.

Assuming that the non-respondents fell into two groups--one, they didn't care to respond for some reason or other; or two, we were not able to locate them--we then turned our energies to other sources. A list of non-respondents was again sent to the Placement Bureau. Students who find teaching positions are requested to return a white card so indicating to the Placement Bureau. In addition, some school systems notify our Placement Bureau when they hire our graduates. Some data was obtained from this source including present addresses and telephone numbers. We

also checked with student records to see if any people had applied for admission to graduate school.

Telephone contact was made with non-respondents who had not been accounted for using any of the above procedures. Because of the cost factor, only Indiana students were contacted. In most instances, communication was with a parent rather than the student directly. This activity then represented our final attempt to identify the whereabouts of our former students.

Part II The Findings

The results of this study are organized into three sections. In the first, our primary concern relates to those who were actually seeking teaching positions. Not all were ready to move into the market place. Some simply did not graduate on the normal four-year student calendar assumed. And others, who did complete their degrees and thus qualify for a teaching certificate, did not choose to move directly into their chosen profession upon graduation. The second section deals with these students.

The last section provides data relative to role, grade level taught, and other matters.

Table I Provides a limited overview regarding our first two concerns.

Table I

PARTICIPANTS IN THE BLOCK PROGRAM*

	Number	Percentage
In the Block Program** (Spring and Fall, 1976)	91	100%
Completed Graduation Requirements	79	87%
Did not Graduate (As of August, 1977)	12	13%
Graduated/Qualified for Teaching		100%
Certificate	79	
Available for Placement	64	81%
Not Available for Placement	12	16%
Not Located	3	3%
Available for Placement	64	100%
Found/Offered Teaching Positions	58	91%
Found Related Positions	6	9%
Not Available for Placement	12	100%
Graduate School	4	
Got Married (Location uncertain/children)	4	
Interested in Other Jobs	4	

*This model for reporting manpower data is the same one used by the Federal Government. See Summary Data: Vocational Education. Fiscal Year 1974 published by U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare/Office of Education/Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education/Office of Adult, Vocation, Technical, and Manpower Education/Division of Vocational and Technical Education.

**The Block Program is a professional semester which precedes Student Teaching. Completion of this semester does not necessarily mean that one will complete all other requirements and actually graduate. Of the 91 students enrolled in the Block Program during 1976, we were able to locate and account for 88.

***Another student was just located. She did find a position. Altogether 59 out of 65 students found full-time teaching positions. All but 2 students were ultimately located and accounted for.

Those Seeking Teaching Positions. Table II describes what happened to the 64 students who were seeking full-time teaching positions. Of this number 91 percent were successful. All students were able to find related positions--these are positions which require a degree, one where preparation as an elementary major was critical to employment. In all instances, these persons were serving as substitute teachers.

Table II

STUDENTS LOOKING FOR POSITION

	Number	Percentage
Total Number Looking for Positions	64	100%
Found Teaching Positions/Accepted	58	91%
Found Related Positions	6	9%
Other Positons Unemployed	0	-

Those Not Seeking Teaching Positions. As already noted, 24 of the 91 students included in the study were not seeking teaching positions at the time of the study. Their reasons for not doing so are noted in Table III. Those who got married were: (a) uncertain of their husband's future job location and, hence, could not look; or (b) were expecting children.

Table III

NOT LOOKING FOR POSITIONS

Had not graduated yet	12
Married	4
Interested in other jobs	4
Graduate School	4
Total	24

~~What do these people ultimately do? What about the eight who were looking but did not find teaching jobs or positions in related fields? How does the one who turned down offers? Table V provides this information.~~

Teaching Role and Level of Assignment. The data gathered here, Tables IV and V, is not very complete. In many instances, this section of the questionnaire was simply not filled out. This usually occurred when parents filled out the forms but sometimes with students as well. Information gleaned from other sources simply was not available as happened in telephone interviews with parents.

Table IV

TEACHING ROLE

	Number
Self-contained	31
Departmentalized	10
Team or Coop Teaching	6
Differentiated Staffing	1
Special Teaching Assignment	2
Open School	1
IGE	1
(No Response)	(6)
Total	58

Table V

TEACHING ASSIGNMENT

	Number
Nursery-Kindergarten	1
Primary	25
Intermediate	22
JHS/Middle School	4
(No Response)	(6)
Total	53

Results: Job Search Activities. Tables VI through IX describe activities associated with the job search. Emphasis upon individual initiative is clearly highlighted in these data. Friends are also mentioned frequently as a major help in finding positions. The number of applications varied considerably, some students finding positions on the first try while others made over twenty (20) applications for jobs. The data gathered here suffered from the same types of problems discerned previously--information not always noted.

Table VI

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

No Response	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20+
(6)	20	24	6	2	6

*64 looking for teaching position

Table VII

DATE OF CONTRACT SIGNING

July and Earlier	August	September	October	November	No Response
15	25	7	0	2	9

Table VIII

TYPES OF CONTACT

Credentials Sent	43
Letters of Inquiry	40
Application Forms	53
Telephone Calls	51
Interview: Central Office Personnel	39
Interview: Principal	42
Interview: Teacher	8

Table IX

GETTING A POSITION
(Source of Help)

Source Used	Total	(Low)	Value of Source				(High)
	Responses	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Placement Bureau	35	19	4	2	2	4	2	2
Friend	41	4	0	1	4	10	8	14
Professional Association	24	12	4	1	2	0	2	3
Personal Initiative	52	1	1	1	4	8	15	22
Employment Agency	21	18	0	0	0	0	0	3
Student Teaching Experience	2							

Part III Conclusions

With respect to the questions investigated, it would seem reasonable to conclude the following.

Participants in the Block Program, who move on to complete their degree requirements and then move actively into the job market seeking full-time positions, are successful in achieving their objectives. Of those seeking full-time teaching positions, 90% find them. When considering teaching and other related positions, the figure rises to 100%.

Most of our students continue to assume positions in public schools which are organized on a Self-Contained basis. The remainder, about equally divided, go into schools featuring Team Teaching or Departmentalization. Many of our students wrote back personal notes describing their situations, especially if they were somewhat unique. Based upon this data and the assumption that those who did not comment were probably in more traditional settings (Self-Contained), it would seem safe to conclude that there is no great necessity to change the thrust of the Block Program at this time to something associated with either Team Teaching or Departmentalized roles. This would also help to explain why so few people are interested in Option III of our Master's Degree Program, that which has been designed for teachers who would have specialized subject matter interests. These conclusions are identical to those associated with other studies completed in recent years.

The data provided with respect to level of teaching assignment, did not indicate anything of real significance. About one-half of the students teach in the primary grades (K - 3) and half in intermediate grades.

To find teaching positions requires considerable personal initiative on the part of each candidate, though it is not nearly as great an effort as has been rumored. Of those reporting, most fill out less than ten application forms, not really too bad considering the current supply and demand situation. The assistance of friends also helps considerable in obtaining a job.

Part IV Next Steps

As with last year's study, the information obtained in this study has been most interesting and will undoubtedly continue to affect the behavior of both students and faculty in many ways. One can predict with some degree of confidence that students at lower levels will very much want to get into the Block Program as results of this study are publicized. Students presently in the program are certainly encouraged--they probably will continue to put forth good efforts, both this semester and during Student Teaching. This has been very, very evident since our first study was completed several years ago. Our past graduates certainly ought to be pleased and hopefully they will cooperate in future research.

Faculty cannot help but be affected by these results. Certainly we will continue to put forth a maximum effort to provide a strong program of instruction. Participation in a field-based program, even a modified one such as Block, requires a tremendous amount of time and energy. Successful pay off is again confirmed. We all need such positive feedback.

During the past year we have been able to develop a very extensive file of our past graduates (1973 thur 1977). We know where they are

located and have the names of their schools and principals. This data has been very useful in helping new graduates with contacts. Eventually we hope to use the population data base as a means of ascertaining the strengths and weaknesses of our graduates. This information can then be used to restructure and improve our teacher education program here on campus.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

THE BLOCK PROGRAM

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF 1977 GRADUATES

A. Name and Present Address

_____
First Last

_____
Street Number

_____
City State Zip Code

B. When did you graduate? (Please check)

- ☐ January, 1977
- ☐ May, 1977
- ☐ August, 1977
- ☐ Did not graduate as of August 1977

C. Did you look for a teaching position after graduation? (Please circle)

Yes No

1. If not, why did you not look for a teaching position?

- ☐ Got married - future location uncertain
- ☐ Went on to graduate school
- ☐ Realized teaching not for me
- ☐ Expecting a child
- ☐ Interested in other jobs
- ☐ Other (Please explain)

_____

_____

If yes, did you get a teaching position? (Please circle)

Yes No

If so, where?

_____
Principal (area code) Phone

_____
Name of School Street Number

_____
City State Zip Code

2. Teaching role: (Please check)

- [ ] Self Contained
- [ ] Departmentalized
- [ ] Team (Or Cooperative) Teaching
- [ ] Differentiated Staffing
- [ ] Special Teacher (Reading, Art, P.E., etc.)
- [ ] Other (Please explain)

_____

_____

School level: (please check)

- [ ] Nursery
- [ ] Primary (k-3)
- [ ] Intermediate (4-6)
- [ ] Junior H.S./Middle School
- [ ] Other (Please explain)

_____

_____

3. When did you get your teaching position?

_____
Month Year

4. When did you actually sign your contract?

_____
Month Year

D. In how many places did you apply? (Please check)

- [ ] 0-4
- [ ] 5-9
- [ ] 10-14
- [ ] 15-19
- [ ] 20 and above

E. In securing your teaching position, which of the following was most helpful? Check all that apply and indicate degree of helpfulness. (Circle the number)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Not Helpful Helpful Most Helpful

- [ ] Help of the IU Placement Bureau — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- [ ] Help of a friend — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- [ ] Assistance of a professional association — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- [ ] Through personal application — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- [ ] Help of an employment agency — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- [ ] Other (Please explain) — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

_____

_____

F. In seeking a teaching position, what kind of contacts did you make? (Check all that apply)

___ Sent Placement credentials
___ Wrote letter of inquiry
___ Sent Letter of application
___ Made telephone call(s)
___ Other (Please explain)

___ Had interview with Central Personnel (Supt./Asst. Supt./or Director of Personnel)
___ Had interview with principal
___ Had interview with teacher

_____

_____

G. If you were looking for a position, but are not teaching, did you receive any offers? (Please circle)

Yes No

If yes, why did you turn down the job? (Please explain)

_____

_____

H. If you are not teaching, but are employed, please describe the job you now hold.

_____

_____

Did your preparation as an Elementary Major help you get this job? (Please circle)

Yes No